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SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

EXCISE

DATE: May 27, 1952

SUBJECT: [redacted]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
RETRIEVED BY: DATE: DEC 19 81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

PARTICIPANTS: Colonel Roberto Barrios Peña
MID - Mr. Siracusa
MID - Mr. Clark

COPIES TO: ARA - Mr. Mann
MID - Mr. Clark
American Embassy, Guatemala (Informally)
ARA, DRA, ARA Board

An acquaintance in the IED, [redacted] called me this morning, saying that a friend of hers had arrived from Guatemala and desired to see me urgently. She was reluctant to mention his name although she said his business related to official matters. I indicated that I would receive her visitor.

He arrived a few minutes later and introduced himself a[s] [redacted]

[redacted] said that he was traveling in the United States under the name of [redacted] Apparently he had entered the Oschner Clinic in New Orleans several days ago and claims to have been followed. It seems that he left his cousin in his place in the Clinic and came here clandestinely under his assumed name. He identified himself as the leader of the anti-communist movement in Guatemala which he claimed had some 300,000 followers.

For a considerable time he spoke in detail about the sorry state to which Arevalo, Arbenz and the communists have brought Guatemala. He was extremely agitated about the agrarian reform law and described how the organization established to administer it would give the communists a political structure through which to exploit the Indian and other landless elements in Guatemala. He said that Arbenz was collaborating fully with the communists and that the army would support him. He said that a number of key officers in the army are communists

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and that in any case the army is nothing more than a bunch of drunkards living in the lap of luxury by which the administration has bought its support. He then proceeded to say, without going into detail, that there would be grave occurrences in Guatemala in the near future. He kept referring to the inevitable "acontecimientos". Thereupon he said that he had two questions: a) what is the opinion of the United States in this matter, and b) what will the United States do when the "acontecimientos" occur?

Up to this point Mr. Clark and Mr. Siracusa had merely listened politely to what [redacted] to say. B1,EC

As to question (a) it was pointed out to [redacted] that there should be no doubt as to the position of the United States with respect to communism. He was reminded that the United States, with the United Nations, was fighting communist imperialism in Korea and that we were putting the resources of our nation along with those of our allies to the building of strength in the free world for the purpose of opposing communist aggression and of building a community of nations which would respect law and human dignity. As for Guatemala, specifically, he was told that the United States was, of course, concerned with the extent to which a small group of communists have been able to so implant themselves as to bear a serious disproportionate influence in that country. No reference whatsoever was made to his movement in Guatemala or to whether or not the United States is in sympathy with it or with any other political group there. B1,EC

As to question (b) he was informed that the United States could only view possible internal struggles in Guatemala as purely domestic issues involving Guatemala alone and that it, therefore, would maintain, in such events, its traditional policy of non-interference and non-intervention. He said that he understood this and of course was not asking for the intervention of the United States. He said, however, that unlike the army and the communist labor groups, his organization is unarmed. If in their demonstrations the army should fire on the anti-communists, he could not be responsible for the lengths to which they would go to preserve their rights. He spoke in terms of civil war and a possible massacre of his group and claimed that the United States, as the power of preponderant influence in the Western Hemisphere, could not escape taking notice of the situation on moral and humanitarian grounds if on no other.

Again he was told that the policy of the United States is that of non-intervention. It was said, however, that should events reach proportions such as he described, they might arouse interest of the Organization of American States or possibly the United Nations.

[redacted] expressed his thanks for the courtesy with which he had been received and departed, saying that he would be leaving Washington that same afternoon B1,EC

afternoon. During the course of the conversation he mentioned the potential danger to him of his mission here and asked that it be kept in confidence. He was assured that the Department had no intention of advertising his visit. He also said that he was here entirely on his own and that the Comite Civico which heads up the anti-communist movement was not aware of his trip to Washington.

[redacted] B1,E

In commenting on the Arana assassination [redacted] said that it had been conceived in the Defense Council over which Arbenz presided. He said that he learned of it on the Saturday before Arana's death (he was killed on Monday) and warned Arana who dismissed it as unfounded rumor. [redacted] said he resigned in 1947 because he could not stomach what was happening. He said that while he deplored Arana's assassination, he was not an Arana supporter. B1,E

AFA:MTL:[illegible]